BOOK V

MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE TRUST SERIES

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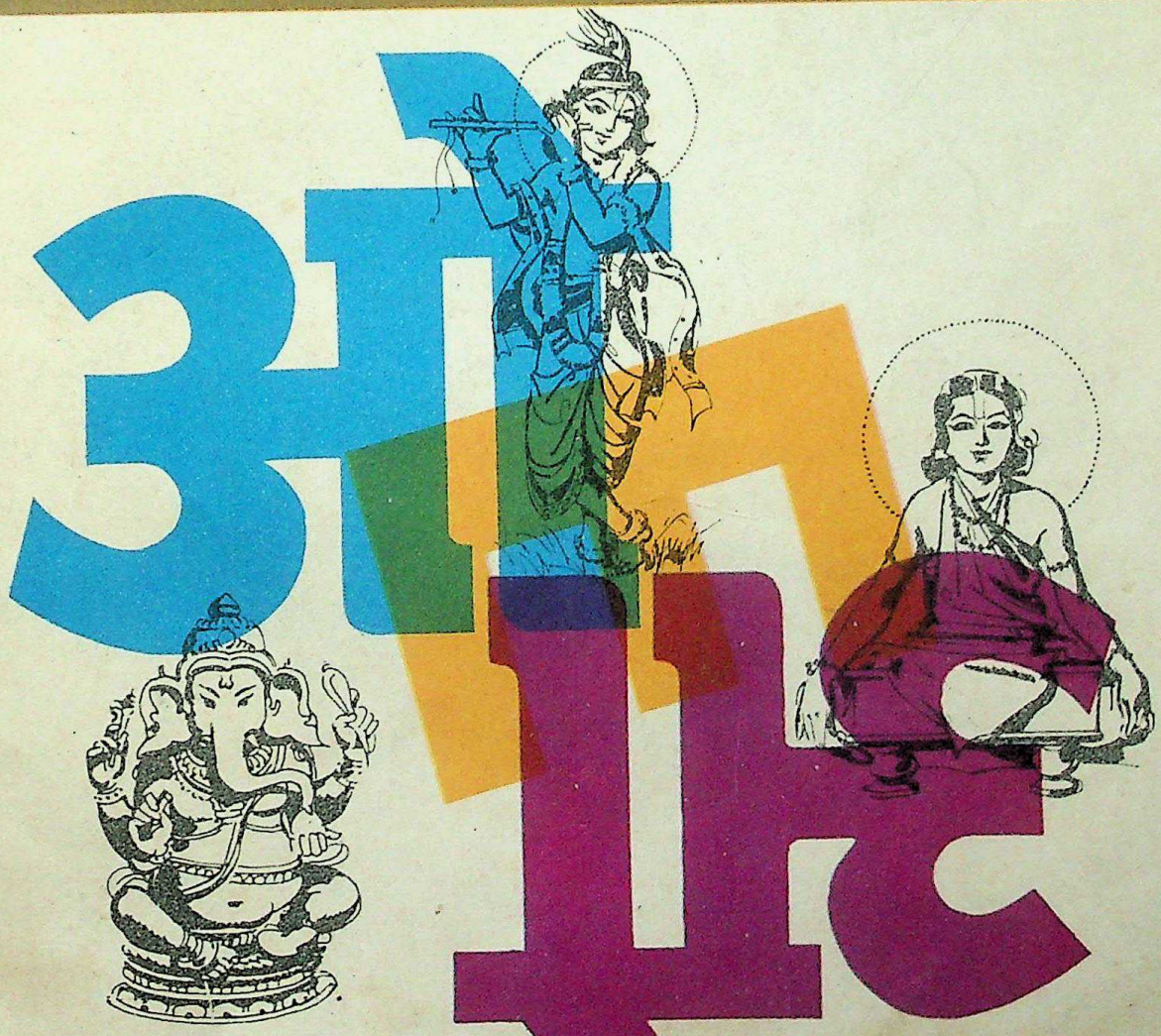
culture course



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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY-400 007

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MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE TRUST SERIES

CULTURE COURSE

BOOK 5

FOR STANDARD V

By

S. RAMAKRISHNAN

V. A. K. AYER

1984

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

BOMBAY

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PREFACE

We are familiar with the character-moulding impact of grandmother's tales, on impressionable minds. Through the ages, it has been the privilege of the elders of the family to convey to children, through bed-time stories, a broad conception of the fundamental values of life.

Even today, particularly in rural households, children drop off to sleep lulled by lofty lullabies and stories and legends of the wisdom and the prowess of our ancestors narrated by elders.

Things are different today. With the growing disruption and dislocation of the family setting, and the increasing urbanization, when winning the bread and keeping the hearth have become the foremost preoccupation of a hurly-burly life, young people are deprived of this nourishing food for the soul.

Young hearts and minds not yet warped by the harsher realities of life and the deadening climate of an age characterized by a technological avalanche and a soulless materialism, have to be provided with right mental and spiritual food and nourishment from infancy. They should be enabled to gradually learn, appreciate and absorb our tradition, history and culture.

The late Kulapati Munshiji felt that the first concrete step in this direction would be to prepare a series of graded Culture Course Text Books for Standards I to XI, suited to the calibre and assimilative capacity of different age-groups among our children.

A munificent donation of Rs. 1 lakh from the Mahalakshmi Temple Trust, Bombay, through Shri J. M. Barot, its Managing Trustee, enabled the Bhavan to translate this long-cherished dream of Kulapatiji into a reality. Kulapatiji, in grateful recognition of this donation had offered to name the Scheme "Mahalakshmi Temple Trust Series."

In 1969, Kulapatiji appointed a Special Committee with Shri S. Ramakrishnan as Chairman and Dr. Shalini Amonkar and Shri V. A. K. Ayer as Convenors to prepare comprehensive syllabi.

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The syllabi drawn up by the Committee were submitted to many eminent spiritual leaders, men of letters, educationists, and other scholars for guidance and suggestions. Those who blessed the scheme, scrutinised the syllabi, and helped us with their valuable suggestions, include the late Sri Rajaji and Sri Sri Prakasa, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Kanchi, Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Sringeri, Swami Ranganathananda, Swami Chinmayananda, Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamigal, Dr. G. S. Pathak, Dr. A. L. Mudaliar, Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, Dr. D. V. Gundappa, Dr. Karan Singh, Dr. D. C. Pavate, Dr. V. K. Gokak and Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar. The Bhavan is beholden to them all.

The texts for different Standards had the benefit of having been actually tried out by teachers in the Bhavan's Schools in different parts of the country.

These graded Culture Course Text Books are the Bhavan's humble offering to the nation in the vital task of inculcating in our youth a passionate love for and an awareness of the amazing unity and continuity of the tradition, history and culture of our Motherland, and make them exclaim with joy: "We are all children of Mother India! India is One and Indivisible! What a great nation! What a wonderful heritage!"

I am grateful to the numerous fellow-workers who encouraged the Bhavan in this mission with their valuable advice and help. While they are too numerous to be individually mentioned, I would, however, like to particularly record our sense of gratitude to Kulapati S. Balakrishna Joshi, Prof. M. A. Mazumdar, Principal K. S. Talpade, Principal L. A. Vyas, Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan, Prof. B. R. Kulkarni and Prof. R. A. Kashyap who have made useful contribution to the successful implementation of this scheme.

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN
Bombay
January 1, 1974.

DHARAMSEY M. KHATAU
President.

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Prayer

Lesson 1

(a) *Krishnaya Vasudevaya*
Devaki nandanayacha /
Nandagopa kumaraya
Govindaya namonamah //

(b) *Ritam vadishyami /* — I shall speak of the right.
Satyam vadishyami / — I shall speak of the Truth.
Tanmamavatu / — May that protect me.

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Brave Jatayu

Lesson 2

RAMA, Lakshmana and Sita were living in a forest.

One day, the two princes were away from the *ashrama*. Sita was alone.

Rama had gone to bring the golden deer. Hearing the voice of Rama calling, "Ha Lakshmana, Ha Sita," Sita sent Lakshmana to help Rama.

She was anxiously awaiting the return of both.

At that time Ravana entered the *ashrama*. He was dressed like a *sannyasi*. Seeing no one was near, he carried Sita away forcibly in his chariot.

His was a magic chariot. It flew up in the air like a bird.

Sita cried from the chariot: "O Rama! Lakshmana! Ravana is carrying me away. Stop him and free me!"

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At that time Jatayu, a magnificent eagle, was sitting on a tree.

Jatayu was the King of the eagles. He had a brother called Sampati. Their mother was called Vinata. They were divine birds. They knew the *sastras*. They could speak like human beings and fight too.

Jatayu heard Sita's cry for help and saw the chariot flying above.

He flew up to Ravana, and protested: "Oh Ravana! It is wrong to carry away another man's wife," he said. "A learned man like you should not take away by force a helpless woman. If Rama comes to know about it, he will kill you. Please set her free."

Ravana said "No".

So Jatayu fought with him. Ravana shot sharp arrows at the bird. They hurt him severely. Blood flowed from the wounds. Jatayu attacked Ravana with his beak and talons. He kicked off Ravana's crown. It fell down on the earth and broke to pieces. He also killed the horses of Ravana's chariot, and its driver. So the chariot too fell on the earth, and was smashed.

The bird then bit off Ravana's hand that held Sita. But when one hand fell off, another grew on Ravana's body!

At last Ravana cut off the bird's wings and also his talons. Unable to fly, the bird fell on the earth. It was unable to move.

Sita wept for brave Jatayu.

Ravana now caught Sita, and flew again into the sky, carrying her. He reached Lanka, and put Sita in prison.

When Rama and Lakshmana returned to the *ashrama,* the *ashrama* was empty. They could not find Sita.

Rama said: "Rakshasas must have carried her away, and eaten her up. O Lakshmana, why did you leave her alone?"

The two brothers then started searching the forest for Sita. As they looked here and there, they saw the fallen Jatayu. He was at the point of death.

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Hearing their voice, he said: "O Rama! Ravana has carried away Sita. I fought him but I failed to rescue Sita. He has taken her to Lanka. Go and get her. God will bless you."

After saying these words, Jatayu died.

Rama and Lakshmana wept for Jatayu.

They also did the last religious rites for the bird.

Jatayu was a bird. Yet he tried to save a helpless woman from the clutches of a wicked man. We worship Jatayu as a God today.

MEANINGS

Anxiously = Eagerly with fear

Protested = Objected

Rites = Ceremonies

Magnificent = Great in deeds, noble

Talons = Claws

Clutches = Strong hold

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Jatayu?
2. What did he see one day?
3. What did he do?
4. Did Ravana let go of Sita? Why not?
5. How did Rama and Lakshmana come to know about what happened to Sita?
6. How did they treat Jatayu?
7. What do you learn from this story?

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THE Pandavas had made their home in a forest.

One day Rishi Vyasa came to them. He said to Arjuna: "Go to the Himalayas. Do *tapas*, and get awe-inspiring weapons from the Gods. Then you will be able to defeat your enemies easily."

Arjuna took leave of his brothers, mother Kunti and wife Draupadi, and went to the Himalayas.

At the foot of the great mountains, Indra, the King of Gods, met him.

He asked Arjuna: "What can a warrior be doing here? People come here for doing *tapas*!"

Arjuna replied: "Lord, please give me some mighty weapons of war!"

Indra said: "If you want such weapons, you must do penance, and seek Siva's grace."

Arjuna said: "I will do as you say," and went up the mountain.

There he chose a quiet place. He prayed fervently to God Siva.

At this time Siva in the form of a hunter armed with bow and arrows, and followed by his huntress wife, was chasing a wild boar. When the boar saw Arjuna, it charged him furiously. Arjuna immediately shot an arrow at the boar. The hunter too aimed his arrows. This arrow first struck Arjuna's arrow and pushed it aside and then flew on to strike the boar. The boar fell dead.

Seeing this, Arjuna became angry.

He said to the hunter: "How dare you kill my game?"

The hunter retorted: "I chased the boar, not you. Why did you shoot? Don't boast about your strength. Come and fight me if you dare!"

Arjuna let off a shower of arrows at the hunter. But none of them hit him. They all fell away harmlessly.

Then Arjuna struck the hunter on the head with his bow. The bow was called Gandiva, and it always instilled terror. But the hunter simply put out his hand and seized the bow from him.

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Arjuna then struck the hunter with his sword. The sword broke into two. It did not hurt the hunter!

Then he fought with the hunter hand to hand. This time too Arjuna was easily defeated.

At once Arjuna knew it was not an ordinary hunter he was fighting. He felt humble, and sat down and began to meditate on God Siva.

Slowly he realized who the hunter was. When he knew it was God Siva Himself, he fell at His feet, and pleaded, "God forgive me for fighting you!"

God Siva said: "I forgive you gladly, my child!" And he gave back Arjuna his bow, Gandiva.

God Siva also gave Arjuna many other powerful weapons.

Pasupati is one of the many names of Siva.

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The weapon he gave, therefore, is known as 'Pasupatastra'. 'Astra' means weapon. Astras are divine weapons.

Arjuna felt happy seeing God face to face.

Poet Bharavi has written in Sanskrit a great poem on this incident. The poem is called *Kiratarjuniyam*. 'Kirata' means hunter.

MEANINGS

Awe-inspiring = Causing great fear
Penance = Tapas
Fervently = Deeply, ardently
Furiously = With great force
Game = Animal hunted
Instilled terror = Caused fear
Seized = Caught

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Why did Arjuna go to the Himalayas?
2. What was Indra's advice to him?
3. Who came before Arjuna one day? What happened?
4. Why was Arjuna defeated?
5. What is the name of the bow of Arjuna?
6. What has poet Bharavi written?

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Sudama

Lesson 4

GOD Krishna had in his student days a classmate, who was very poor. His name was Sudama.

Krishna became king of Dwaraka later on.

Sudama remained a poor householder. He had many children. He was, however, a god-loving man.

Everyday Sudama went out singing *bhajans* in the streets. People gave him handfuls of rice. He came home and gave the rice to his wife. She cooked it. Sudama first offered the food to God. Next he gave part of it to his guests. Then he fed his children. The husband and wife ate what remained.

Sudama never stored food for the next day. He was sure God would feed him everyday, as He had always fed him.

When the children grew up, the alms Sudama brought were not enough. On some days they had to go without food.

Sudama had no fine clothes to wear. He was in rags. So people called him 'Kuchela'. It means a man with torn clothes.

One day Sudama's wife said to him: "Lord! Why don't you meet Krishna? You were at school together. He will surely help us!"

Sudama had been wanting to see his friend Krishna, not for money, but for the joy of meeting a beloved friend.

When we go to see a baby, a great man or God in a temple we must not go without gifts. We must take with us some sweets as a token of affection or respect. Sudama took what his wife could give him—a small package of beaten rice. They were that poor.

Sudama walked all the way to Dwaraka. When he reached Krishna's palace, he went in.

Krishna saw him from a distance. At once he rushed out and met Sudama at the gate. He gave him a great welcome. He embraced him. He washed Sudama's feet. He took him to his room, and seated him on a silken cot. Krishna's wife Rukmini gently

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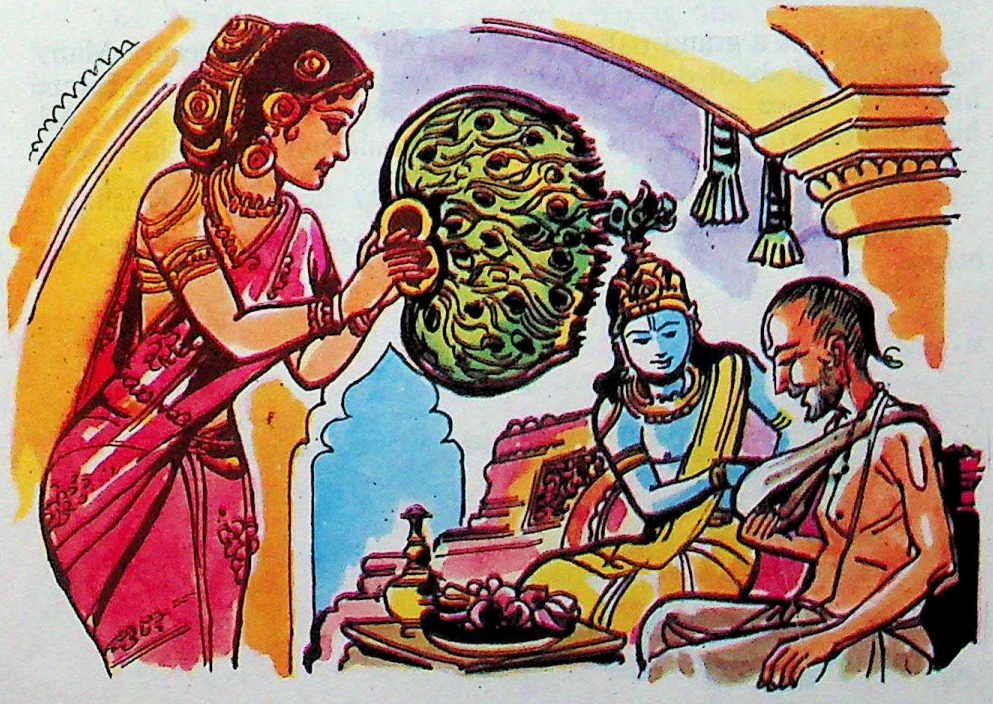
fanned Sudama. The maids-in-waiting gave him plenty of sweet food and delicious drink in golden vessels.

Sudama had never seen such a beautiful palace or such riches. No one had ever treated him so nicely before. So he did not even know how to thank Krishna for the hospitality.

After Sudama had taken a rest, Krishna spoke to him of their student days and about their teacher, Sandipani.

At last Krishna said to him: "Are you married? How many



children have you?" Sudama nodded his head shyly, meaning to say that he was happy and content.

"I am sure you have brought something for me to eat," said Krishna suddenly.

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Sudama was ashamed to take out the package of beaten rice. But Krishna saw the bag and pulled it out. Taking a handful from and putting it in his mouth, he said: "How nice of your wife to have sent this to me?" Then he ate two more handfuls.

After spending the day happily at Dwaraka, Sudama took leave of Krishna, and walked back to his village.

He completely forgot to ask for any gift or favour of Krishna.

On the way he was thinking how loyal and generous Krishna had been.

When Sudama reached home, a great miracle waited for him there.

There was a grand palace where his old home had been. Many servants went about doing all kinds of work. His wife stood before him. She wore a costly sari and had golden ornaments on! All his children wore gorgeous clothes. He could not believe his eyes.

Sudama's wife said: "It all happened by the grace of Krishna."

Sudama worshipped Krishna with greater devotion than ever before.

MEANINGS

Delicious = Tasty
Hospitality = Friendly welcome and feeding of guests
Content = Satisfied
Loyal = Devoted to him
Miracle = Divine happening
Gorgeous = Richly coloured

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Sudama?
2. What was his life like?
3. What did his wife ask him to do one day?
4. How did Krishna receive Sudama?
5. Did Sudama ask of Krishna any help? Why not?
6. How did Sudama become rich?

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Emperor Shibi

Lesson 5

LONG, long ago there was a great emperor in our country. His name was Shibi. He was a very good and learned man.

Once he did a *yaga*. The Gods Agni and Indra wanted to bless Shibi. But before doing so, they wanted to test him to see how good he was.

Agni took the form of a dove and Indra, the form of a hawk. Now the dove and the hawk are both birds; but the hawk is a cruel bird. It kills other birds and eats them. In olden days kings trained hawks and used them for catching other birds. They practised this as a sport.

The hawk in the story started chasing the dove. Greatly frightened of the hawk, and to save its life, the dove flew as fast as it could in the air but eventually became so tired that it fell in the lap of Emperor Shibi. The dove's body shivered in fear.

Shibi stroked the bird gently to allay its fear. When the hawk appeared before him, he quickly hid the dove beneath his upper garment.

The hawk said: "O King Shibi! Why do you hide the dove from me?"

Shibi answered: "Don't you see the poor bird is terribly afraid of you? You will kill him. Is it not the king's duty to protect those who seek shelter in him? The dove fell in my lap. So it is my duty to save him from you!"

The hawk protested, saying: "Don't you know that it is my nature to kill other birds and eat them? Is it not wrong of you to try to prevent me from pursuing my natural *dharma?*"

Shibi replied: "I agree, O hawk. Remembering my *dharma* also, can I give you any other kind of flesh, as a substitute for this dove? In fact, I shall give you my entire kingdom, if you leave this dove alone!"

The hawk suggested: "There is only one way you can save the dove. Give me part of your own flesh equal in weight to that of the dove."

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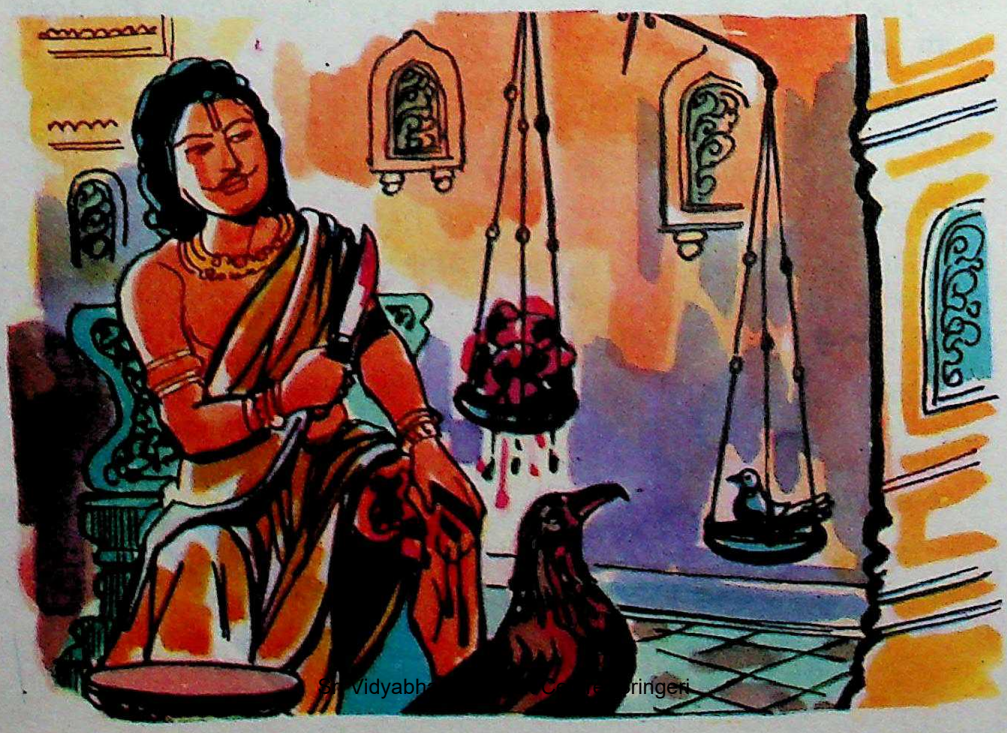
Shibi said: "How happy I am to hear you say that! Here, take this."

With this, Shibi cut a part of his flesh from his body, and placed it in one of the pans of a balance and put the dove in the other pan. But it was less than the weight of the dove. So the king cut some more of his flesh and put it in the balance. It made no difference. More and more of Shibi's flesh was thrown into the balance. But the balance was still tipped on the side of the dove. As a final measure, the king threw his own body into the scale against that of the dove. Only then did the two weights seem equal.

Then Shibi said to the hawk: "Now you can eat me and let the dove go."

Then the birds revealed their real forms as Indra and Agni.

They said: "Shibi, we came to test your devotion to your *dharma*. We are fully satisfied that nothing will make you forsake your *dharma*. We bless you!"



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The Gods then returned to heaven.

Shibi ruled the country for a long time. After death he went to heaven. His name is now the very symbol of self-sacrifice.

MEANINGS

Emperor = King of kings
Eventually = Finally
Allay = Reduce
Shelter = Protection
Substitute = One thing for another
Tipped = Pointed
Revealed = Showed
Forsake = Give up

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. In what form did the Gods Indra and Agni come to Shibi? Why?
2. Why did Shibi protect the dove?
3. What was the hawk's objection?
4. How did Shibi try to satisfy the hawk?
5. Why were the Gods pleased with Shibi?

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Zarathushtra

Lesson 6

YOU might have seen Fire Temples in a city like Bombay.

The people who worship in these temples are Parsis. They wear a tall black cap and white Kurta or tunic. They also wear a sacred thread.

They are followers of a religion taught by a great prophet by name Zarathushtra. He was also called Zoroaster.

Zarathushtra was born some 3000 years ago. He lived in the country now called Iran. It is far away from India. Its old name was Persia. Since the religion came from Persia, those who belong to it are called Parsis.

When Zarathushtra was a child, wicked people tried to kill him by throwing him among fierce bulls, and then among horses' feet. But the child was not harmed.

When Zarathushtra grew to be a young man, God Ahura Mazda appeared before him. God taught him what to do, and what truths he should preach to the world. Zarathushtra then spread the Zoroastrian religion with the help of the King of Iran.

The Parsis had to run away from Iran because invaders started persecuting them.

They came to India and settled on the banks of the river Sanjana in Gujarat 300 years ago. A Rajput king by name Jadi Rana gave

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them permission to live in his State. From that time they have lived in India. They follow their old religion, but have adopted India as their country.

Zarathushtra wrote his teachings in the *Avesta* language. Twenty-one Holy Books were written by him. These books contain certain *mantras*. These *mantras* teach us that there are two forces at work in the world. One is the force of good, and the other is the force of evil. God wants man to follow the good, and fight the evil. Man should think good, speak good and do good.

Zarathushtra asked his followers to be merciful. He asked them to use their wealth for the good and welfare of the poor. He taught them the *mantra* of service and sacrifice for the sake of others.

Zarathushtra had an ever-burning Fire in his hands. God Ahura Mazda gave it to him. It is believed that the sight of fire can turn the evil in man into good.

The temples with such Holy Fire are called Fire-Temples. Parsis offer their prayers to the Holy Fire. The most sacred and also the most famous Fire-Temple in India is at Udwada in Gujarat. The Holy Fire in this temple is called 'Iran Shah'.

MEANINGS

Persecuting = Continuously giving trouble

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. When and where did Zarathushtra live?
2. What is the name of the religion preached by Zarathushtra?
3. Who are the Parsis? What do they wear?
4. What is a Fire-Temple?
5. In what language did Zarathushtra write his teachings?
6. What are the teachings of Zarathushtra?

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Guru Nanak

Lesson 7

FIVE hundred years ago there lived in Talwandi village in Punjab a man who was an accountant by profession. His name was Kalu Chand. He was a Kshatriya by caste. His wife was Tripta. To them were born a son and a daughter. They called them Nanak and Nanaki.

From his childhood, Nanak had a love of God.

Kalu Chand sent Nanak to school at the age of seven. At school Nanak did not attend to his studies. He always sat silent. Outside the school he sang of God's greatness in the company of other boys of the village.

One day his teacher said to him: "Why do you idle your time in the class?"

Nanak said: "Sir, I like to think more of God than of my lessons."

The teacher at once knew Nanak would become a great saint one day.

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Kalu Chand appointed private tutors to teach Nanak Hindi, Sanskrit and Persian. From all of them Nanak tried to learn more about God than about languages.

Nanak was married to a girl called Sulakshana. They had two sons. Yet Nanak did not try to earn any money to make a living.

Sister Nanaki took Nanak to Sultanpur. There, her husband got him the post of a storekeeper. For a time Nanak worked hard, but soon started giving away food-stuffs like *atta* to *sannyasis* without taking money in return.

One day, he left the job, and went to a forest to meditate on God.

In the forest Nanak did *tapas*. God appeared before him, and said: "Always say my name, and teach others to do the same."

Nanak decided to carry this message to the world. Nanak then went on a pilgrimage to holy places. He went to Kasi, Gaya, Puri, Rameshwaram, Ceylon, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and other far off places too like Mecca.

Mecca is a holy place in a country called Saudi Arabia. There Mohammed, the founder of Islam, was born. Nanak went there for worship.

One day at Mecca Nanak slept with his feet turned towards the Kaaba. Kaaba is a holy building.

The priest said to Nanak: "Do not keep your legs turned that way; it is like insulting God."

Nanak said: "Sir, if you think so, will you turn my feet where God is not?"

The priest dragged Nanak's legs and placed them in another direction. Then a miracle happened. The structure also turned towards Nanak's legs!

All the people at once knew that Nanak was not an ordinary man, but a saint. They also learnt anew the lesson that God is everywhere.

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Here is the gist of Nanak's teachings: "There is only one God. Hindus and Muslims are not different people. All are one. God and God's name are the same everywhere. Repeating God's name is the only way to reach God."

On the basis of these teachings Nanak started a new religion. It is called Sikhism. It comes from the word *Sishya*. It means disciple. God is the Teacher, and all of us are His *Sishyas*. Since Nanak taught it to the world, he is called Guru Nanak. His sayings are found in a book called *Adi Granth* or *Granth Sahib*.

The followers of his religion are called Sikhs. They wear pointed turbans and do not shave their beards. Their temple is called 'Gurudwara'. They come mostly from the Punjab. There is a famous Gurudwara in Amritsar called the Golden Temple.

After Nanak, many other Sikh Gurus came who enriched his teachings.

MEANINGS

Profession = Job
Meditate = Think deeply
Founder = One who starts something
Insulting = Abusing
Structure = Building
Anew = Again
Enriched = Increased

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who were Nanak's parents?
2. What do you know about his education?
3. What did he learn from God?
4. Name some of the places of pilgrimage he visited.
5. What are Nanak's teachings?
6. Describe the incident at Mecca.
7. Where is the Golden Temple?

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Prophet Mohammed

Lesson 8

LONG ago there lived a man in Arabia called Abdulla. His wife was Amina. To them was born a son whom they named Mohammed.

When Mohammed was young, both his father and mother died. He thus became an orphan at an early age. So his grandfather brought him up. When the old man died, Mohammed's uncle took care of him.

Mohammed first tended sheep. Later he looked after a caravan. In Arabia camels are used to carry men and goods from place to place. The camels form a line one behind the other like a train. This train of camels is called a caravan. Everyone thought highly of Mohammed because he was good, honest and truthful.

Mohammed married a lady called Kadija. Many children were born to them. Only one girl survived. All the others died. She was called Fatima.

When Kadija died, Mohammed married another woman called Ayesha.

Once the people of Arabia rebuilt the Kaaba in a city called Mecca. Kaaba was their temple. The people invited Mohammed to install the black-stone in the building. It was a great honour.

Mohammed became deeply religious. He often went to a cave near Mecca and meditated on God for days together.

At that time people in Arabia worshipped many Gods. So the wise men of the country came to Mohammed, and asked him to teach the people to worship the only true God. Mohammed did so. He said: "True religion is worshipping the one God and serving humanity. People must have faith in God, do good deeds, and treat all men as brothers."

In the beginning, many people laughed at him, some even stoned and insulted him. But as he was a man of God, Mohammed was not afraid. He went on preaching his message.

Slowly people began to understand his teaching, and many became his followers.

A time came when Mohammed's followers had to run away from Mecca to Abyssinia, a foreign country, in order to escape

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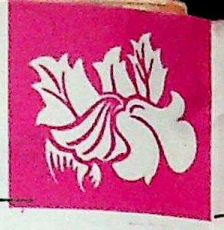

persecution by their enemies. But Mohammed remained in Mecca. So he and his relatives had to suffer a great deal of harassment.

In Medina, however, another city of Arabia, most people became Mohammed's disciples. Later Mohammed also came to Medina; for it was feared that if he stayed in Mecca his life might be in danger. Medina now became the city of Islam, the religion of the one God, preached by Mohammed.

Large numbers of people from Mecca came to Medina to fight Mohammed and his followers. Mohammed prayed to God, and the Meccans were defeated in the war. There was yet another war. In that war too Mohammed's followers won. At last peace came and Mohammed went to Mecca, and blessed the people.

After Mohammed died, many people joined Islam. Islam is the religion preached by Mohammed. Today it has a great following and Mohammed is known as the Prophet, because he brought the message of God.

The people of Islam pray: "God is great; there is only one God; Mohammmed is God's messenger."

MEANINGS

Orphan = One whose father and mother are dead

Survived = Remained alive

Harassment = Repeated attack

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who were Mohammed's parents?
2. Whom did he marry? Who was his child?
3. How did the people of Arabia honour Mohammed?
4. Why did the people of Arabia fight one another?
5. What did Mohammed teach?
6. Why is Mohammed called the Prophet?

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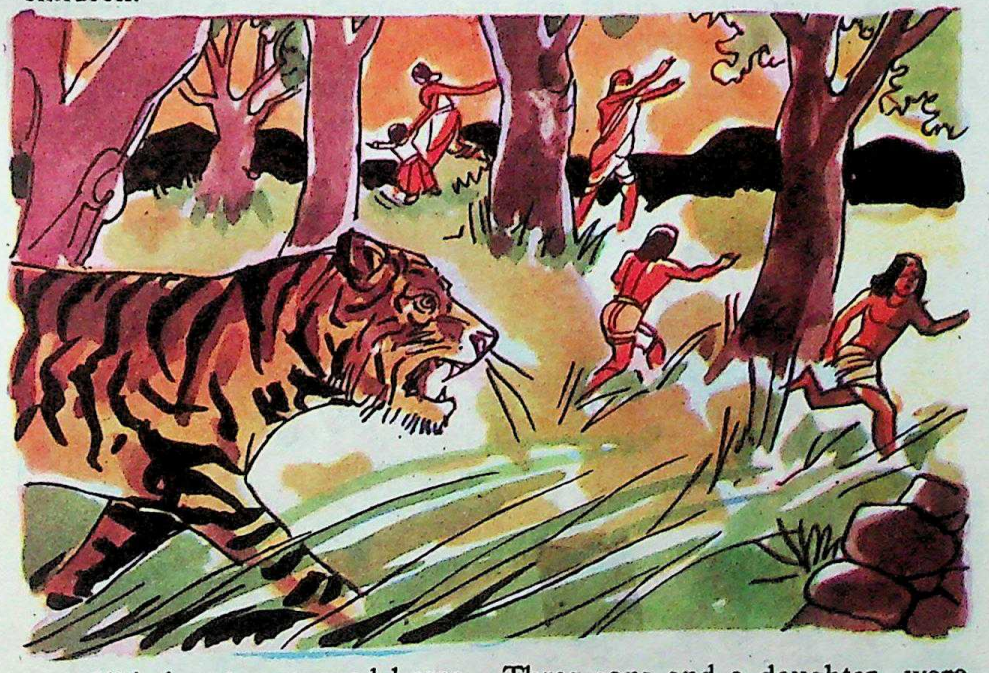
Jnanadeva

Lesson 9

ON the banks of the Godavari in Maharashtra is a village called Apegaon.

A saintly person called Vithalpant lived in that village long ago. Rakhumabai was his wife.

For a long time they had no children. Disgusted with life Vithalpant went to Kasi, and studied under a *Guru*. After some time his *Guru* sent him back to his village, saying that he would have children.



Vithalpant returned home. Three sons and a daughter were born to him. They were Nivrittinath, Jnanadeva, Sopana and Muktabai, girl.

Once Vithalpant went to Triyambak near Nasik with his children. There is a hill called Brahmagiri. The river Godavari starts from the hill.

While the father and children were walking up the hill, a tiger suddenly appeared. Seeing it, all of them ran way. Vithalpant, Jnanadeva, Sopana and Muktabai arrived home safely. Nivrittinath became separated. He, however, returned home after a few days.

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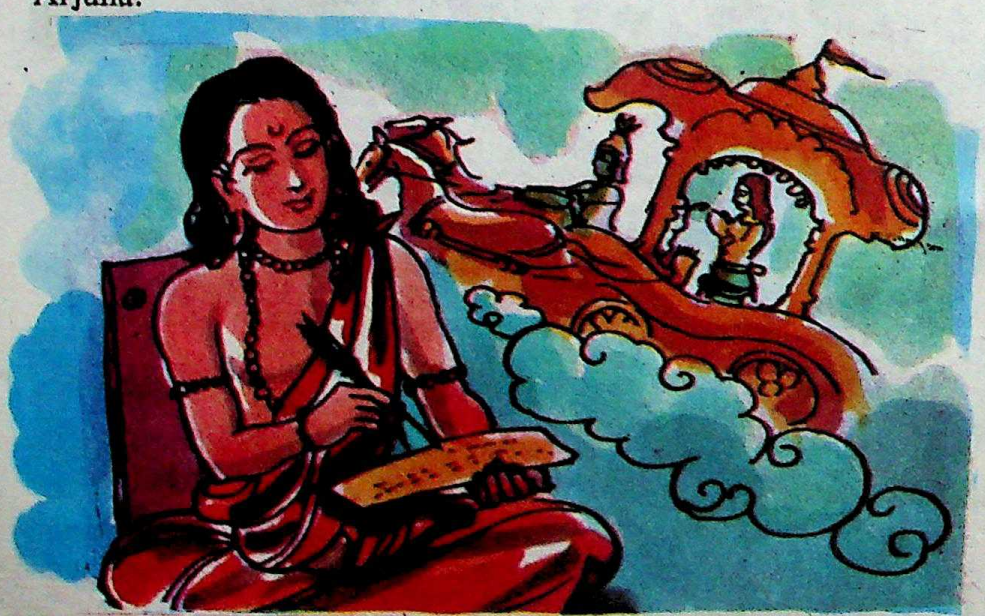
This is what happened. Seeing the tiger, Nivrittinath took shelter in a cave. In that cave there was a saint. He liked Nivrittinath, and taught him how to worship God.

Later when Vithalpant died, Nivrittinath taught Jnanadev how to worship God. The *Guru* of Jnanadeva was thus his own brother.

Very soon Jnanadeva became learned in the *sastras*.

Once a saint named Sachidananda Baba fell ill with a dangerous disease. Jnanadeva cured him by his miraculous powers. From that time Baba became his disciple.

You have heard of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It is a book of religious poems. It contains the teachings of God Krishna as conveyed to Arjuna.



Jnanadeva became very learned in the *Gita*. He spoke to people explaining the meaning of the *Gita* in Marathi. Sachidananda Baba wrote out all Jnanadeva said. The book so composed is now called *Jnaneswari*. *Jnaneswari* explains the meaning of the *Gita* so well and it contains so many examples of everyday life that it appeals to everyone. Jnanadeva was only 19 years of age at that time.

Jnanadeva also wrote another book called *Amritanubhava*.

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Once Jnanadeva went to Pandharpur to worship God Vithala. There he met another saint called Namadeva. They at once became united together in a long companionship. From there they travelled together to many places like Delhi and Banares.

Wherever they went, they taught the people the love of God.

When Jnanadeva was 22, he went to Alandi, near Poona. There in front of the temple of God Siddheswara, Jnanadeva gave up his life by an act of his own will.

People have raised a *samadhi* over his body.

When a *sannyasi* dies, people dig a pit in the ground, place his body in it, and fill it with sand. Over it they build a small temple. It is called *samadhi*.

Jnanadeva's *samadhi* at Alandi has become a place of pilgrimage. Large numbers of people go to worship there.

MEANINGS

Miraculous = Divine
Conveyed = Taught
Companionship = Friendship.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who were the parents of Jnanadeva?
2. Who were his brothers and sister?
3. What happened one day in Triyambak?
4. Who was Jnanadeva's *Guru?*
5. What is the book on *Gita* written by Jnanadeva?
6. What is his other book?
7. Where is Jnanadeva's *samadhi?*

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IN the village of Athanur in the Chola country, there lived a pious man called Nanda.

He belonged to the tiller class. We call them Harijans today.

Nanda worked for the village, and lived on whatever the people gave him.

Nanda was greatly devoted to God Siva.

In temples they beat drums. Haven't you heard them? These drums need leather. Leather comes from the bodies of dead animals. Nanda gave leather pieces to Siva temples free, because of his love of God.

Everyday Nanda stood at a distance from the temple, and worshipped God. He could not go into the temple. In those days Harijans were not allowed entry into big temples.

Near Athanur was another village called Punkanur. In Punkanur is a great Siva temple. Nanda went to that village also to worship the God there. He could not go inside. So there also he prayed from outside the temple gate.

In Siva temples you might have noticed a stone bull in a sitting posture in front of the God. The bull is the animal God Siva rides. So Siva temples have these carven bulls before the Linga.

At Punkanur this stone bull is so big that Nanda could not see the God inside the temple. The bull shut off the view. Nanda felt very sad because he could not see God.

At last he prayed to God Siva: "O God! I have come here all the way to see You. The bull stands between You and me. Won't You please ask the bull to move aside a little, so that I can see You?"

God was pleased by Nanda's prayer. God asked the stone bull to move its head sideways. Lo! The bull did so, and Nanda could now see the God very well. He danced in joy and sang God's praises. Even today at Punkanur the huge stone bull can be seen. It has moved aside a little.

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In Chola Desa, there is the most holy temple at Chidambaram. It is the temple of God Nataraja. Nanda wanted to worship Nataraja there.

Chidambaram was far off. And Nanda was constantly putting off his visit to it, saying all the time, "may be tomorrow," "may be tomorrow". So people started calling him the "man tomorrow".

At last one day Nanda was able to go to Chidambaram. He was very happy to be there. But he could not go into the temple.

He went round and round the temple instead. He became tired and slept outside the gate at night.

God Nataraja appeared to him at night in his dream, and said, "Nanda, tomorrow you bathe in fire and come inside My temple!"

God Nataraja also said to the priests of the temple in their dream: "My devotee Nanda waits outside. Light a big fire. Ask him to enter it, and afterwards bring him into My temple."

Accordingly, the next day, the priests met Nanda outside the gate.

They lit a big fire, and Nanda entered it joyfully. He was not at all hurt. He came out of the fire looking like a *rishi*.

Then the priests took him inside the temple.

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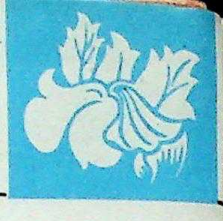

But as soon as Nanda went near God Nataraja, he suddenly disappeared!

They say Nanda became one with God Nataraja.

Such was the devotion of Nanda.

We think of him today as a great saint and call him Nandanar. This word is a respectful term for Nanda.

MEANINGS

Carven = Made out of stone, wood etc.
Constantly = Very often

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Where did Nanda live?
2. How did he spend his days?
3. What happened at Punkanur?
4. Which is the holy temple at Chidambaram?
5. What happened to Nanda at Chidambaram?
6. What do you learn from this story?

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Namdeo

Lesson 11

ABOUT 700 years ago a tailor by name Damasheti lived in Pandharpur. Gonai was his wife. Namadeva or Namdeo, as he is popularly called, was born to them as their son.

Everyday Dama went to the Vithoba temple at Pandharpur, and worshipped God Vithal there.

Have you been to Pandharpur? It is situated on the banks of Bhima. God Vithal is worshipped here. He is in a standing pose. Vithal is really God Krishna.

After *puja*, Dama used to offer *naivedya* or food to the God. Only after doing so did he return home.

Once Dama had to go out of town. So, he asked his young son Namdeo to go to the Vithoba temple and offer *puja* and *naivedya* to God Vithal.

Namdeo did so.

When, however, he offered *naivedya* to God Vithal, Vithal would not eat it! Would a stone idol eat?

But Namdeo was a boy. He thought that, like us all, images too would eat.

So Namdeo said to the God: "God, please eat this food, or my father will beat me."

Young Namdeo begged the God several times to eat the food, with tears in his eyes. Still the image did not eat.

At last Namdeo became desperate. He took out his *dhoti*, rolled it into a sort of cord and tying it round his neck, tried to strangle himself to death.

Seeing this, God Vithal took pity upon the boy, and ate up all the food he gave!

Namdeo became happy, removed the *dhoti* from round his neck, and returned home.

He told Gonai: "Mother, Vithal ate all the food I gave. See, the plate is empty!"

Gonai did not believe her son. She thought Namdeo had dropped the food on the way.

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She sent him again the next day to the Vithal temple with food.

The same thing happened on the second day too. Vithal ate up the food.

When Namdeo told this to his mother, she wanted to make sure about the truth of the report.

So on the third day, after sending Namdeo as usual to the temple, she followed him at a distance.

She saw for herself God Vithal eating the food from Namdeo's hand!

When her husband returned, Gonai told him what she had seen. Both the father and the mother were convinced that Namdeo was no ordinary child.

When he grew up, however, Namdeo fell into bad ways. He became a highway robber. He even killed people.

One day Namdeo, the dacoit, saw a woman beating her child. He asked her: "Why do you beat the child?"

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The woman answered: "A robber once killed his father and from that time I have been a beggar. This boy wants sweetmeats. Where can I get them from?"

Namdeo knew he was himself the robber who had killed the poor woman's husband. The memory pricked his conscience. He felt great remorse for his action.

He ran to a Siva temple, took out a knife and cutting his hand, poured his blood on the Siva Linga.

He cried for pardon before it.

God Siva asked Namdeo to go to Pandharpur.

Accordingly Namdeo went to Pandharpur. There he cried again before God Vithal: "God! Please save me. I will give up all my evil ways, and worship You always."

Namdeo soon turned into a saint. One Kartiki Ekadasi day at Pandharpur, he saw God, and became a God-man.

God Vithal sent him to a *Guru* named Visoba Khechar. The *Guru* said: "Namdeo, love God and sing His praises. You will be happy."

Namdeo did so for the rest of his life. God blessed him and all the members of Namdeo's family.

MEANINGS

Strangle = Choke
Dacoit = Robber
Conscience = Moral sense
Remorse = Feeling guilty

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Namdeo?
2. What happened at the Vithal temple when Dama went out of town?
3. What happened to Namdeo afterwards?
4. What made Namdeo change?
5. To whom did Vithal send him?
6. What did the *Guru* teach Namdeo?

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Narsi Mehta

Lesson 12

IN Gujarat there is a town called Junagadh. In that town lived Narsi Mehta five hundred years ago. He was a great devotee of God Krishna. He sang *bhajans* in honour of God.

You have all heard the song *"Vaishnava jana to"* Narsi wrote that song.

Narsi was a rich man. But he gave away all his money to the poor and needy. He himself became poor thereby.

Manekbai was Narsi's wife. They had a daughter.

Narsi never cared for money. Nor did he worry about his daughter's marriage.

Manekbai one day said to Narsi: "Sethji! Our daughter is old enough to marry. We are poor. Why don't you ask some rich people for money to marry her off?"

Narsi replied: "Listen to me, my dear. Last night God Krishna of Dwaraka came to me in my dream. He said, 'Narsi, do not worry about your daughter's marriage. Send somebody to Dwaraka with a *hundi* for any amount of money Address it to Seth Samaldas. He will give you the money, and you can have your daughter married."

Manekbai was greatly relieved. She asked her husband to write the *hundi* at once.

Narsi wrote a *hundi* for Rs. 1500 and asked their cowherd to take it to Dwaraka. A *hundi* is a letter asking for money with a promise that it would be repaid.

At that time some merchants were staying in the cowherd's house. They were going to Dwaraka. They said: "We have some money. We shall give you Rs. 1500 immediately and take your *hundi*. As we are ourselves going to Dwaraka, we shall collect the money from Seth Samaldas and give him the *hundi*."

Manekbai agreed. She took Rs. 1500 from the merchants. Narsi handed over the *hundi* accordingly.

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Narsi celebrated the marriage of his daughter in a grand manner with the money he borrowed.

The merchants arrived in Dwaraka. They searched for Seth Samaldas.

But in the whole of Dwaraka there was no Seth Samaldas. They were disappointed and also angry. They thought Narsi had deceived them.

At last a man came to see the merchants. He said, "I am Seth Samaldas. What do you want?"

The merchants replied, "We have a *hundi* for Rs. 1500 which Narsi Mehta of Junagadh gave to us."

"Oh! I thought it was for Rs. 2000. Anyway, I have brought Rs. 2000. You may take this entire money and give me the *hundi*!" said Seth Samaldas.

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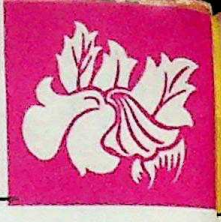

The merchants hesitated. "Sir, how can we take more money than we have given? Please give us only Rs. 1500," they said.

The Seth said: "Doesn't matter. I shall give you Rs. 500 as a gift, because you have helped Narsi."

The merchants were pleased and took the money.

God Krishna himself had come as Seth Samaldas to help his devotee!

MEANINGS

Deceived = Cheated

Hesitated = Were undecided

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Narsi Mehta? Where did he live?
2. Which is his famous song?
3. How did he spend his money?
4. Who came to Narsi in his dream, and what did he say?
5. How did Narsi get the money for his daughter's marriage?
6. Who accepted the *hundi*? How? What do you learn from Narsi's life?

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Sanchi

Lesson 13

WHEN you travel from Bombay to Delhi, you see near Bhopal the great *stupa* at Sanchi. It has the shape of a big hemisphere. If you cut a ball into equal halves, each half would be a hemisphere.

A *stupa* is always built on a grave where some great personality is buried. Or it may be built over the ashes of a person's body.

Once the Buddha said to his disciple Ananda: "When I die, burn my body. Build a *stupa* over the ashes of the body at a place where four streets meet."

Even before the time of the Buddha, people built *stupas* over the remains of great men and women. But after the Buddha, this became a regular Buddhist practice.

This *stupa* at Sanchi was built by Emperor Asoka in memory of his queen Devi. Asoka became a Buddhist monk after a murderous war he waged in Kalinga.

Once, while he was young, Asoka had to go to Ujjain. On the way he halted at Vidisa. In that city he saw a beautiful girl. Her name was Devi. She was the daughter of a merchant. He liked her very much. So he married her, and took her to his capital. To Asoka and Devi were born a son and daughter.

After Asoka became a Buddhist monk, he spread Buddha's teachings all over this country, and also in other countries. Asoka's son too became a monk, and he also propagated the Buddha's teachings.

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Afterwards, Devi came back to Vidisa. She built a monastery at Sanchi near Vidisa. She built a *vihara* for herself, and spent much of her time there in meditation.

Asoka once returned to Sanchi, and wanted to make it a great centre of Buddhist religion. When Devi died, Asoka built this *stupa* first in a small way. Later on other Buddhists built a larger one around it.

A *stupa* has a circular base as well as a circular top. It is built of brick or stone.

On the top is a square box-like structure. It is called *harmika.*

Above the *harmika* are planted three umbrellas, each smaller than the one below. The umbrella is a sign that there is a royal person laid to rest underneath.

All round the *stupa* there is a circular path for going round in a *pradakshina.* This path is fenced by railings.

There are four gateways leading to the great *stupa* at Sanchi. Beautiful sculptures are carved on the gates. Thousands of people visit Sanchi to see the beauty of this *stupa.* It is a place sacred to most Indians.

MEANINGS

Monk = Sannyasi
Murderous war = A war in which many people were killed
Propagated = Spread
Monastery = House for monks
Underneath = Below

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Where is Sanchi?
2. Who built the Great Stupa first?
3. Why did Asoka build the *stupa?*
4. What else do you see at the Great Stupa in Sanchi?

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Ajanta

Lesson 14

OUR country is famous for its sculptures and paintings.

Many of them are found on the pillars and walls of our temples.

Some others are seen on the walls of caves. These caves can be several hundred years old. The best known cave temples are at Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra.

The Ajanta caves are situated near Aurangabad. They are cut in the sides of the Sahyadri mountains and are far away from the town.

These caves are surrounded by beautiful trees and plants. By the side of the very last cave, there is a lovely waterfall called the Seven Falls. Here, the water falls from a height of 100 feet, and flows into a tank cut among rocks.

These caves were carved out long, long ago. Buddhist monks came here to meditate.

For a long time no one knew about these caves.

About 150 years ago, a British military officer saw them by chance. He told others. Many scholars and artists from other countries came and saw them. They were charmed by all that they saw. They copied the paintings and sculptures. They showed them to others. Thus the whole world came to know about these ancient treasures of art.

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These caves are of two kinds: Chaityas or temples and Viharas or places for the monks to live in. There are five Chaitya halls and four Viharas.

The life of the Buddha is depicted in the paintings on the walls of Viharas. Even the ceilings have paintings on them. There are pillars carrying the Dharma Chakra. Four lions support the Chakra.

There are some beautiful sculptures too. The figures of Naga Raja and Rani in one of the caves are the ones most admired. There is also a figure of a mother and child.

The Ajanta caves contain some of the finest works of art. We see images of kings and queens, princes and princesses, soldiers and generals, brahmins and monks, shopkeepers and their customers. We see animals such as horses, elephants, bulls, lions, wolves and monkeys. We see all kinds of birds, trees and people. All are cut out in stone.

We see at Ajanta paintings of *Yakshas* that is, heavenly beings, palaces and huts. We also see many kinds of costumes and jewellery in the wall-paintings of Ajanta.

A great European painter said of the cave temples of Ajanta: "They are a living drama of life. Everyone must go and see them."

MEANINGS

Ceiling = Inner roof

Costumes = Dresses

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Where is Ajanta?
2. What does it contain?
3. How was Ajanta discovered?
4. What are Chaityas and Viharas?
5. What does a great European painter say of Ajanta?

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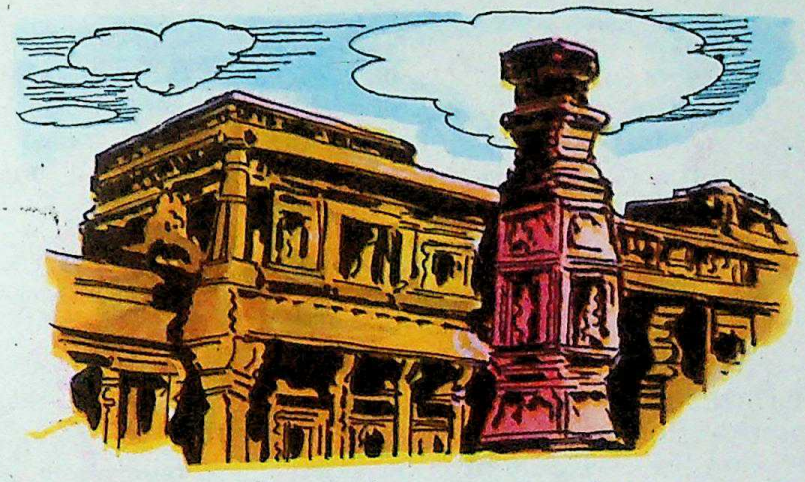
Ellora

Lesson 15



THE Ellora caves too are near Aurangabad. They number 31.

The Ajanta caves contain scenes from the life of the Buddha. The Ellora caves contain mostly scenes from Hindu and Jain religious life. The most famous of the Ellora sculptures are in the Kailasa temple and the Indra Sabha. They were carved hundreds of years ago, and are still very beautiful.

At Ellora most of the images are of Hindu Gods. The Sivalinga, Chandrasekhara, and Siva with Uma or Parvati are the forms of God Siva that are shown. The story of Arjuna getting Pasupatastra, Ardhanariswara, Kalyanasundara are other well known figures. You have read the story of Arjuna getting the *astra* from Siva. In one of the images God Siva is half man, half woman that is, Ardhanariswara.

Another image shows the marriage of the God Siva.

Some of the ten *avataras* of God Vishnu figure in the sculpture. Ganapati, Brahma, Lakshmi, Saraswati are among the other Gods and Goddesses engraved in stone in the Ellora caves.

In the Ellora group there are eleven Viharas and one Chaitya. In one cave there is a sculpture of the seated Buddha.

Some caves have places for storage.

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The window and entrance of one of the Chaityas are shaped like a horseshoe.

The temple of Kailasa is the most beautiful work of art in Ellora. This big temple is cut out from one huge rock. Doorways, windows, staircases, rows of pillars are all chiselled from the same rock. A number of Hindu Gods and Goddesses are carved on the pillars. There are also a *gopuram* or tower, a *nandi-mandapa* and *vimana*. The entrance has two storeys.

This temple looks like a chariot standing on the back of elephants.

Inside the other temples there are stone figures of elephants and lions.

Many stories from the *Puranas* are carved in the panels. One of them is the story of Prahlada. The other is the killing of Tripurasura by God Siva. The third is the story of the punishment God Vishnu administered to Emperor Bali.

The *Dasavatara* caves show Siva as Bhairava killing an Asura. There is also an engraving of Kali.

In other caves there are figures of Gandharvas, the divine musicians.

On the north of the Kailasa temple is the temple of Ravaneshwar.

Among the Jain caves, the Indra Sabha and Jagannath Sabha are the prominent ones. There is the figure of Mahavira in the first. There are also carvings of *Yaksha* and *Yakshini*.

The Jagannath Sabha has one storey. The Sabha's walls contain figures of Mahavira.

Other important sculptures of these Jain caves are those of Parshvanath and Gomateswar.

There are paintings too at Ellora. The temples of Ganesh and Kailasa have many. A battle scene is one of the paintings. In the Rangamahal, there is a painting of the dancing Siva. We also see a painting of the flying *Apsaras* in the Jain caves.

When you grow up you must go and see the excellent works of art in the Ellora caves.

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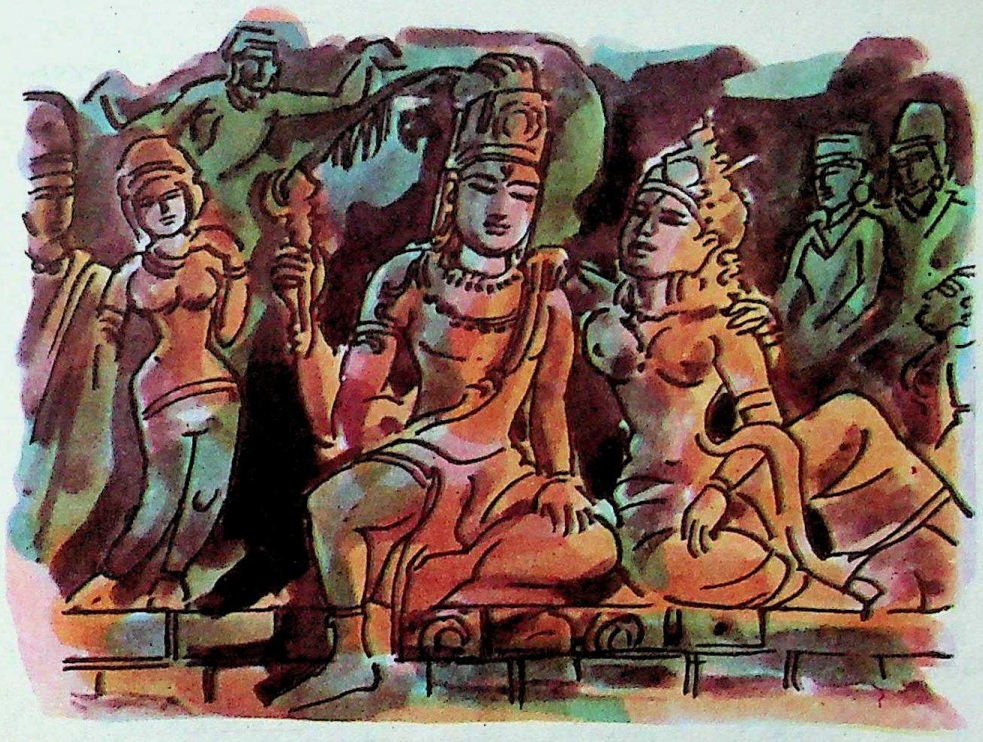

MEANINGS

Avatara = God taking birth in the world; incarnation

Chiselled = Carved

Panel = Art work enclosed in border

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Where is Ellora?
2. How many caves are there? How many Chaityas and Viharas?
3. What do you know of the Kailasa Temple?
4. What Jaina Gods are seen in Ellora?
5. Does Ellora contain any painting?

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WHEN Jesus Christ was thirty years old, he became a famous preacher.

He spoke of God to people in his native land around the Lake of Galilee, in Palestine.

By the time he was thirty-three years old, people knew that he was a Messiah or the Messenger of God, come to earth to teach man the way of God-life.

Jerusalem was the capital. A Roman Governor ruled over the territory. There was a holy temple in Jerusalem. Jesus went to the temple one day. A huge crowd followed him. People cheered him all the way, and welcomed him as the Son of God come to save them.

The head priest of the temple was called Caiaphas. He thought the Messiah would be a warrior, or a leading citizen and a rich man. But when he saw that Jesus was the son of a carpenter, and his followers were all poor, he was disappointed.

At the temple, the priest took money and cattle from the pilgrims in the name of God. He thus earned a lot of money.

Jesus did not like it. He said: "This priest has converted the House of God into a market-place! This is not just."

The priest on hearing it became angry. He wanted to do away with Jesus.

Among Jesus' followers was one called Judas. Caiaphas paid him some money, and won him over to his side.

One night Jesus was praying after a religious supper.

Just then Judas brought Caiaphas' guards. They arrested Jesus. Seeing this the rest of Jesus' followers ran away, and hid themselves. They were afraid that they would also be arrested.

The priest accused Jesus of stirring up rebellion against the Roman Government before the Governor of Jerusalem. The Governor's name was Pontius Pilate.

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The Governor ordered Jesus to be put to death, though much against his will because he was not quite sure of Jesus' guilt.

Jesus was taken to a place called Mount Calvary.

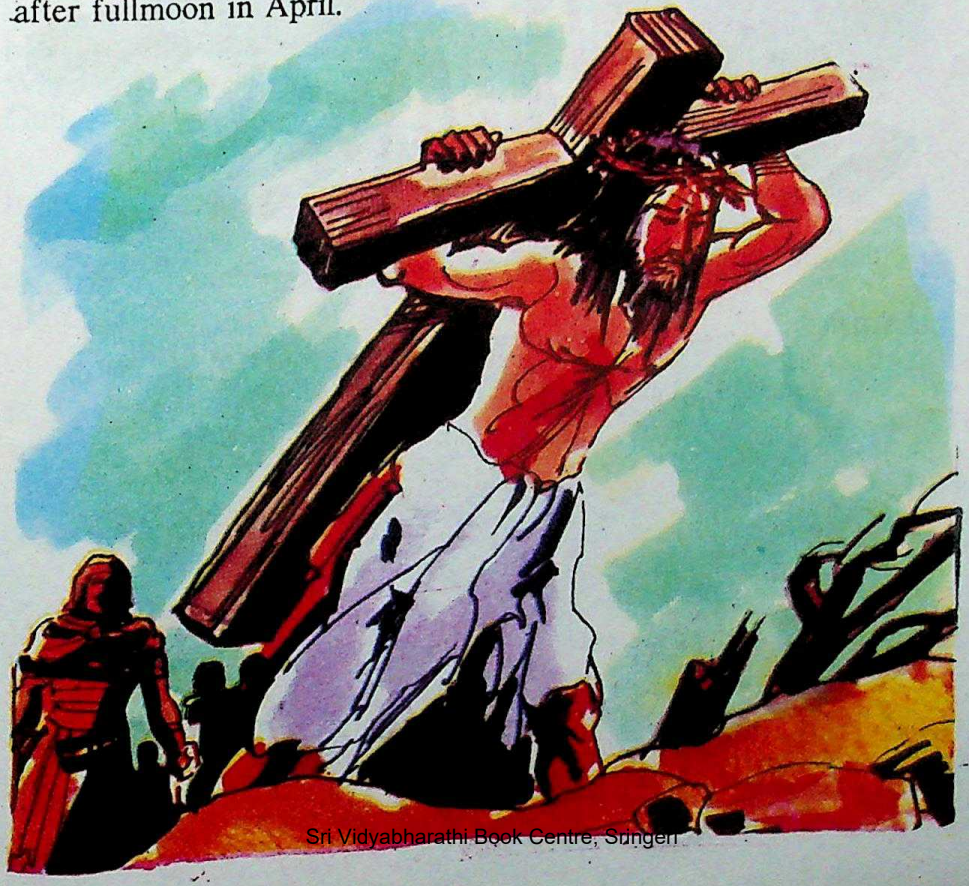
Jesus was made to carry a heavy cross all the way up the hill.

There they crucified Jesus and buried his body.

On the third day after the burial, however, Jesus rose from the grave alive and told his disciples: "Go back and spread my message of love and peace throughout the world."

Jesus then went up to heaven in his human body.

Christians celebrate the resurrection—coming back to life of Jesus, in the Easter festival. Every year it falls on the first Sunday after fullmoon in April.



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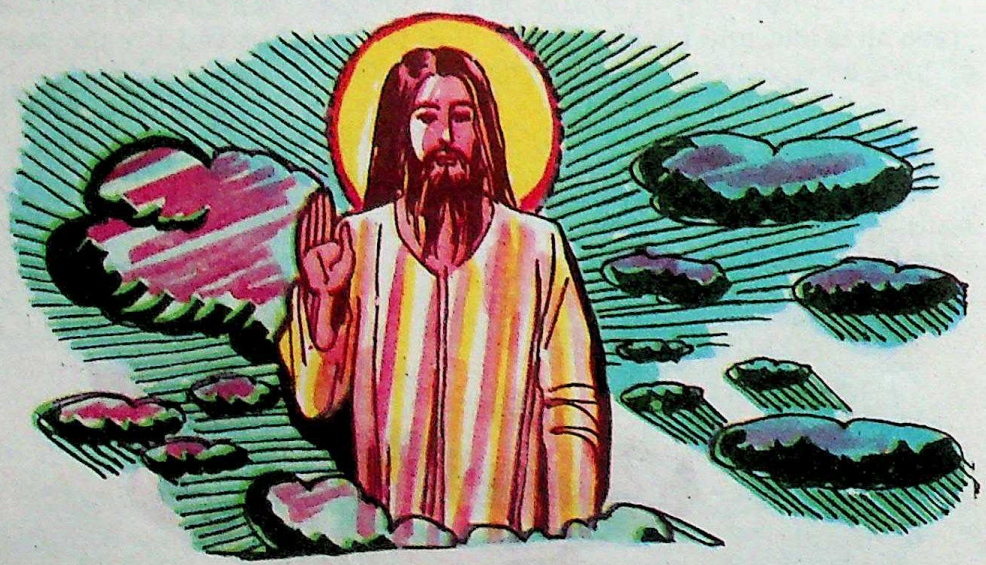
This miracle in the life of Christ shows that love and goodwill always win over evil.

Christians celebrate Easter as a day of feast, and of greetings, when they visit friends and relations.

Christ's message to the world is that we should love one another, return good for evil, and eschew the ways of violence so that there is peace and goodwill on earth.



MEANINGS

Crucified = Put to death on a cross

Eschew = Shun

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Why did Caiaphas want to see Jesus punished?
2. What happened on the day following Christ's death?
3. Why is Easter celebrated?
4. What message did Christ give to the world?

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Ramzan-Id

Lesson 17

SOME of you may have seen the Muslims in your locality praying together in a maidan on a particular day. This would be on a Muslim festival day, called *Ramzan-Id*.

Muslims are followers of the religion preached by the Prophet Mohammed.

Ramzan is the name of one of the twelve months of the Muslim year. It comes in October-November.

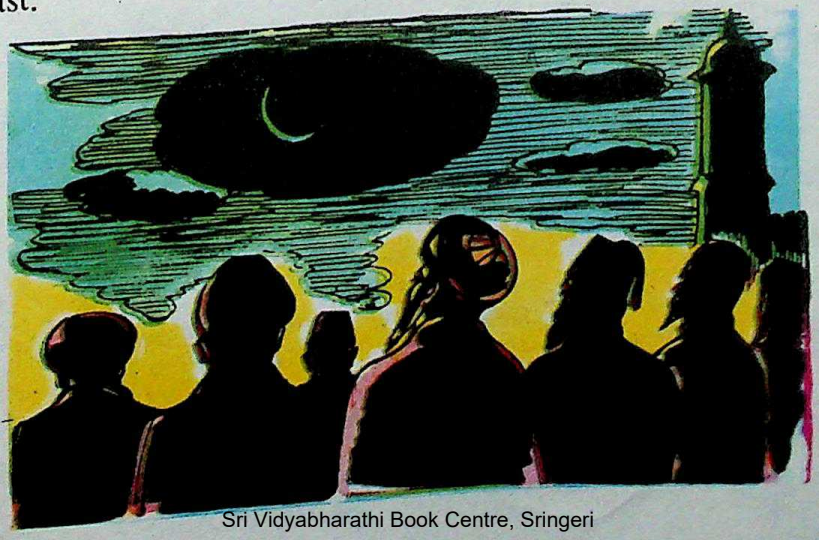
Ramzan is a holy month for Muslims. They fast during the day throughout that month. They do not even drink water. Pious men among them spend the daytime during the month in prayer and reading the *Koran*. They have their meal only at night.

Some of the Muslims spend the twenty-first and twenty-second days of this month in mourning. It is in memory of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, who died in the cause of their religion.

The *Koran*, the holy book of the Muslims, came down from heaven to the earth one night during the last ten days of this month. When the holy book came, the whole of creation praised Allah or God.

At the end of this month comes *Id*. It is celebrated on the day following the sighting of the new moon.

Pious Muslims eagerly scan the sky for the appearance of the thin moon, because only after seeing it, they can break the month-old fast.



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What is most important about the *Id* celebration is that all Muslims pray together at the same place. A Muslim place of worship is called Mosque. Since it cannot hold the thousands that gather at this time, they choose a large maidan and pray there.

On that day, before praying, Muslims wear their best clothes and give alms like wheat or fruit or useful articles to the poor.

They believe that those who do not give alms on this day, will not go to heaven after death.

After giving alms, they go to the house of the Kazi or the Chief Priest, and request him to conduct the prayers. Then they all go together in procession to the chosen spot, and offer their prayers.

After the congregational prayer, the Kazi speaks on religion, and finally prays to God to forgive them their sins and bless them all with health, wealth and prosperity.

At the end of the prayer, they all go with the preacher back to his house.

Afterwards they visit their friends and relatives, have a feast and go shopping in the festive bazaar. Generally, the *Id* is a day on which one expresses one's goodwill for all.

When greeting each other they say "*Id Mubarak*". It means 'Happy *Id*'. They also send *Id* greeting cards, as the Hindus send Diwali and New Year greeting cards.

MEANINGS

Locality = Area
Congregational Prayer = Collective Prayer.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. When does the month of *Ramzan* come?
2. How do Muslims spend the daytime during *Ramzan?*
3. Why do they spend the 21st and 22nd day in mourning?
4. When did the *Koran* descend to the earth?
5. What time of the year is the *Id* festival?
6. How is *Id* celebrated, and how do the Muslims greet each other?

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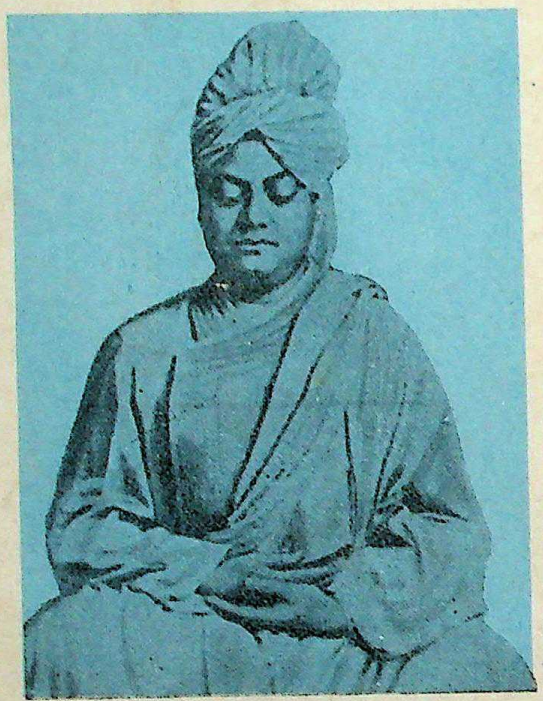

"The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education."

Swami Vivekananda

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